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THE EXAMPLE OF GERMANY

The example of Germany is full of solemn suggestions to philanthropists and a present warning to statesmen. Some of our ideas must be revised and reweighed to achieve a just appreciation :

(1) *Education*.—This has been exploited as a good in itself. It has been said that education democratized and moralized. Possession of it idealized and uplifted the community to fairy heights. This was the view of the philanthropists in this country, especially as applied to the negroes. But their views received a rude shock not only from experience with the negroes, but from the war with Germany. In no other nation was education so widely diffused. But then the very persons entrusted with the lead in education—the professors in the German universities—were foremost in advocating the doctrines of autocracy and inhumanity. Is education then a failure? Not at all. The remedy exists in giving it a right direction, otherwise it may become an evil. The worst criminals are found among the educated class, and Germany is a remarkable instance where education was directed to the worst possible political ends, and became a menace to civilization.

(2) *Slavery*.—The contention before 1860 was that the only trouble with the negro in this country was that he was a slave. We frequently meet with the assertion by respectable writers that the South incurred no loss by the abolition of slavery, that the only change which ensued was that ownership was transferred from the white master to the negro himself. It was even asserted that, as a freeman would work better for himself than for another, abolition really enriched the South. This theory took no account of the idle negro which slavery prohibited, nor any account of race distinctions, and overlooked the fact that there is no necessary connection between the morality of a thing and the physical result. Slavery was morally wrong, but it had the advantage of organization, and the census shows that the South of 1918 is *relatively* nothing like as powerful or wealthy as the South of 1860. The fundamental trouble with the South was its large

negro population which frightened off foreign emigrants and condemned the South to a purely agricultural existence subject to exploitation by the industrial North, and the conditions have not at all been changed by the freedom of the negro. Notwithstanding the passage of time, the South is still mainly agricultural, the negro still hinders its development, and the South is still exploited by the North through high tariffs and business monopolies of all kinds.

Now comes Germany. The people of Germany were not free. They were more or less slaves whose actions were subject to numberless restrictions. In American publications Germany's institutions were represented as a menace to democracy. And yet where was the pursuit of knowledge conducted with greater energy and success? Where was there greater business or industrial development? Where was property more widely diffused or security of life and living more firmly established? In Germany, contradictory to all theorists, slavery was linked with progress and autocracy with general education. Indeed, before the war what country more admired Germany than our own America? German example was copied and cited everywhere.

The bottom fact of Germany's prosperity was organization, and it is certain that there can be no organization without loss of individual liberty. To defeat Germany in arms we had to adopt her own methods and temporarily, at least, to restrict our liberty. For two years we have had plenty of militaristic servitude, and so slavery of the negro being a system of organized action was undoubtedly a stronger factor for material results than abolition, which, in the negro's case, means too often license of action. Nor did abolition do away with race distinctions. On the contrary, it marked off the races in the South more sharply than ever.

Sometimes statements are cited from old slaveowners of their impoverishing experience with negro slaves, but this may only prove their own incapacity for management. How easy it would be to obtain statements of a similar character from persons in the South dealing with the negro as a freeman. It is not entirely just to say that he will not work and is wholly unreliable,

but it is sometimes said. As a matter of fact, where management was effective, as was the case with Edmund Ruffin, of Virginia, unusual success was had in slavery days through the employment of slave labor vitalized by system and intelligent organization.* Must we then return to negro slavery? Not at all. The remedy should be sought in the diffusion of the negroes throughout the United States, and this is a matter in which both the Federal government and State governments should co-operate.

(3) But what of *organization*? Organization imposes slavery of a kind, and the laborer, in many industrial centers especially, is removed not so many degrees from chattell property. The selfish industrial spirit, which is so dependent on organization, forges chains as surely as it forges dollars. The millionaire and the penniless worker still live side by side in the great cities in the North, but there are serious signs around us — signs that indicate a coming revolt and revolution in this country. The astonishing fulfillment of the Marxian doctrine of society evolution from the oriental despot, down through the rule of aristocracy and the bourgeoisie, to the gradual development of power in the hands of the proletariat, gives occasion for much concern. It does not take any large vision to see that the horizon of the future of this country, especially in the North, is red with the fires of Bolshevism, chaos and confiscation. In the last analysis of the social forces the Southern population will prove the most resistant to the onswEEPing deluge of destruction because its labor class of blacks are far more docile than the white labor class of the North, and so many negroes have entered the bourgeoisie by

* Compare the country near Williamsburg with what it was before 1861, and the difference in relative wealth and the grade of its society is distressing. Large tracts, formerly under the plow, have grown up in trees. The free schools have diffused a scanty knowledge, but very few of the people have any extensive information. Before 1861, the country was well tilled, was covered with plantations large and small, whose owners, for the most part, were men of education and refinement. Now a really educated man, in the country from Richmond to Hampton, living outside of the towns, is an exception.

becoming small landholders themselves. That is the one redeeming fact of the negro congestion here. Must we then repress organization and lose the efficiency which has given so many wonderful results? Not at all. Statesmanship, if it is wise, will pass without hesitation every and all laws calculated to remove all just reasons for a complaint. It will continue to improve the condition of the laborer. It will make the possessor of wealth pay the burden of the taxes in proportion as he enjoys the riches of opportunity. Above all, the time has come when we should cease calling everybody who advocates a reform an anarchist and a nihilist. Remember always the tremendous indictment made in the early days of the Republic by the aristocratic and reactionary Chief Justice of Massachusetts against the great democrat and reformer, Jefferson, of Virginia, as "the apostle of atheism and anarchy, bloodshed and plunder." Who associates such terms with Jefferson now?